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**TAJIKISTAN**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **USAID SUPPORTS THE OPENING OF FAMILY MEDICINE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ISTARAVSHAN**

On July 15, 2008, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), represented by Regional Mission Director for Central Asia, William Frej, Dilorom Sadikova Ministry of Health, Sughd Oblast Health Department representatives, and the Head of Istaravshan Hukumat, Mr. M.Kholikov officially opened the second Family Medicine Center of Excellence (CoE) in Istaravshan, Sughd Oblast. The CoE was established as a result of the partnership and collaboration between the Ministry of Health, the USAID ZdravPlus Project, the Sughd Oblast Health Department, and the Istaravshan Hukumat.



Strengthening primary health care (PHC) and introducing family medicine services are priorities supported by the National Health Reform Concept and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy. Access to PHC services promotes disease prevention by encouraging early detection of diseases and reduces hospitalization rates through effective management of chronic conditions. Treatment of medical conditions at the PHC level also reduces the need for referrals to expensive specialists, saving valuable health sector resources and reducing the cost of medical services for families.

This Family Medicine Center of Excellence is an important first step toward promoting the many benefits of primary health care in Istaravshan. Established as part of City Health Center, the CoE will offer the community a package of quality medical services.

The CoE will also be used as a base for continuing medical education of the health workers and family medicine training. The availability of highly qualified family doctors is critical to the successful introduction of family medicine in Tajikistan. The Ministry of Health recognizes that expansion of PHC services across the country will require 4,000 family medicine specialists. This CoE will play an important role in reaching this goal. In June 2008, the first family medicine training program started in this CoE. It is expected that some of the doctors currently being trained as family medicine specialists will themselves become family medicine trainers, and train family medicine specialists in Istaravshan and in other regions of Sughd Oblast.

The USAID ZdravPlus project is one of the many assistance projects implemented in Tajikistan by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on behalf of the American people. Since 1993 the American people through USAID have provided about \$300 million in assistance programs that support economic growth, democratic institutions, health care, and education systems of Tajikistan.